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who will say Nature, not the Weather Bureau, deserves credit for these balmy days and nights in which the temperature only fails to that zestful point at which the chill is known as smelly. But it is generally admitted among forward looking men that Nature is played out and that the Government is responsible for all the good and the ill which befall mankind.

Under these circumstances it is obvious that Mr. Scarr, as the official and responsible custodian of temper, drought, blizzard, humidity and sunlight, is entitled to the compliments of the season and the heartiest wishes for continuance in his present mood of moderation.

## A Commerce Commission Needed.

For half a year a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission who has been doing valuable and urgently needed work has been doing it as an ad interim appointee without confirmation by the Senate. He is HENRY JONES FORD, whose opinion on the New York Intrastate fares and rates case, while winning him high professional commendation for his knowledge and treatment of the subject, also attracted national attention.

It seems to us it would be a timely and fitting act for the Senate at this start of the new year to confirm Mr. Ford in the post he is so admirably filling. The country should be assured of a continuance of his able services, particularly at a juncture when the Interstate Commerce Commission is undermanned, overworked and facing more and heavier labors than at any previous period of its history.

Rarely does a well established custom give way before novelty, and when it does, besides gain in the new, there is a loss of grace and sweetness in the old. A custom now lost to us is that of making social calls on the initial day of the year. Formerly a gentleman might finally liquidate his social debts and knit up old friendships revealed out by neglect or the insistent press of routine duties. Thus the joy and good fellowship of Christmas was prolonged. The selfishness in human nature was finely tempered by altruism.

Moreover, in an ordinary and average community the visits lent a touch of that cosmopolitanism which broadens human nature. Compared with the good will and cheer of the old days, still remembered by many, the modern New Year's Day seems less colorful.

The festive spirit of New Year's Day overleaped all barriers of breed or creed. Of all days in the calendar this was the most universal as to time, while worldwide in place. On other holidays hereditary, social, political or religious motives mingled in the revels, which were more or less related to single epochs, restricted areas or special epochs. On the contrary, the beginning of the year impressed all mankind and in every age. Reflections allied to eternity and boundless space were natural with the thoughtful.

Certainly in New Netherlands this day, rich in joys for mind and body, remained like a red letter in the misal of memory. In these our days of delinquent shops and of food made in factories and packed in tins and cartons one must have a lively imagination to picture the household preparation of old, with the fun and joy of anticipation.

When, after baking and brewing, cakes and ale were ready the house father and the gallant, arrayed in their best garments duly made spotless as to linen and comfortable as to robing by the hula vroom, went forth on the social round. Their object was to pay devotion to the fair, to honor the aged and incidentally to test the quality of their neighbors' cookery. Feasting, merriment, indoor games and story telling fronting the roaring fireplace rounded out the day of joy.

Through the English and American periods and even until within the memory of men hardly very old the good custom continued. Then a mixed population mistook the meaning of the practice. By bad politics, by the visits in mobs, by general dissipation and by too much of that sort of gratitude which may be defined as a lively sense of favors to come hospitality was strained and the beautiful old custom died out.

The story of origins is more pleasing. The custom came first as an importation from Japan to Holland and thence to New Netherlands. Even more durably satisfying was the other Oriental habit as closely allied to it as if the two were Siamese twins. The Japanese tradition required that all financial as well as social debts should be discharged.

The Dutch merchants at Nagasaki on returning to Holland did not renege a habit of their own when they brought the custom of New Year's calling. This was to settle up all accounts and pay all debts by December 31, so as to face the new year with a clean record. Some of us by experience and close observation know this to be so far the case in Japan that a faulty trader's rating falls at once, while in private life a man may be socially ostracized if he is in debt on New Year's Day. "Borrowing money with the smile of an angel but paying with the scowl of a demon" is a very old proverb in the Orient.

Likewise when the Dutch republicans built their unrivaled Town Hall—so ill fitted for a palace—in Amsterdam in 1648 they gave the sculptor a free hand and unlimited guilders to put into marble such scenes as the fall

of Icarus, as well as Arion on the dolphin—the footbridge speculator and the bold but wise venturer. In the marble bas-reliefs over the doors opening into the chambers of bankruptcy and marine insurance cases are shown rats and mice gnawing at empty boxes and papers. In allegory Disgrace and Punishment are seen, as well as Strength, Wisdom and Plenty—the safeguards of a prosperous city.

The inner meaning and bottom fact of New Year's Joy in both Japan and Holland is thus easily discerned. The celebration was made purposely so personal and social that an honest man could face his friends and the world because he was free and had a clean record. Dynamic indeed are the social forces working for the preservation of society!

Perhaps the point may be as well taken, the moral be as plain and the duty as manifest for our national rulers as for the humblest individual. Age cannot wither nor custom stale the laws of honesty. Let nations as well as individuals keep out of debt. Short settlements make long friendships. Is not an honest government, as truly as a man, the noblest work of God?

To the abounding credit of itself and to the enormous advantage of the country, the House Appropriations Committee is going at the department estimates for the next fiscal year with butcher knives.

Out of a total of more than \$800,000,000 asked for in the sundry civil bills more than half has been slashed away, leaving only \$383,000,000. One item of \$300,000 wanted by the Department of Justice for the enforcement of the prohibition act disappeared with not a red penny left to tell the tale. From the Shipping Board requests \$147,000,000 was taken out by the roots. Other estimates have felt the same sharp blade.

In these days, when Government spending has come to be thought of in terms of billions, the supply civil items, huge as they are, may look like chicken feed. But when a good deal more than \$400,000,000 can be slashed out of \$800,000,000 it does not seem as if it would be a superhuman job for the committee axe swingers to take all the way from a billion to two billions out of the total estimates of \$4,000,000,000 submitted by all the departments.

The appropriations certainly can come down to three and a half billions of dollars. Probably they can come down to three and a quarter billions. Possibly they can come down to three billions. This would mean immediately and directly tons of dead weight lifted off the backs of American industry, American business and American taxpayers. It would mean indirectly and later hundredweights more off their shoulders, because when the Government gets down to a sane, solid spending basis with abundant revenues coming in from sound and moderate taxes it can begin to wipe out its floating and funded debt.

As the national debt goes down not only will the interest payments on it go down but the Government's credit will go up. Then, if refunding is necessary or desirable, it can refund the rest of the debt at moderate interest rates.

Anyhow the thing for Congress to do now is to go on, and go the limit, with its strong arm cutting on the old fashioned, horse sense principle that the way to save big money like little money is to save it.

Exit D'Annunzio.

The future plans and movements of the late dictator of Fiume are shrouded in a becoming poetic mystery. The world may speculate as it likes; he vouchsafes no statement. A message from Rome says that he flew away in an airplane. But where? Not to Italy, to the Italians' relief! The tragedian who foretold for himself a glorious death, fighting sword in hand with his back to the wall of a ruined, conquered city, contents himself with leaving a letter in which he affirms that Italy is unworthy of the least pin prick of his blood, and which is so bespattered with insults as to be unprintable. An inglorious anti-climax which D'Annunzio as poet and orator would have scorned.

D'Annunzio left his mark on Fiume history and Fiume is not likely soon to forget him. His occupation of the place had much to do with making it a free city. He served Italy by compelling Europe to accept a different solution of the Adriatic question from that which the Peace Conference had insisted upon, a solution which both Italy and Jugo-Slavia regarded as consistent with their own needs and requirements and as likely to maintain peace in Southern Europe.

D'Annunzio overplayed his part. With the end Italy desired attained he lingered on in his historic rôle. The glory of reviving a medieval Venetian or Florentine state with himself as head surrounded with the trappings of office and attendants and retainers to carry out his decrees appealed enormously to his egotism and vanity. This semblance of a government had for him a greater fascination than the duty of upholding the honor of Italy at stake as a signatory to the Rapallo treaty.

He threw away his great opportunity to return to Italy and receive as a reward for his patriotic self-denial a triumphant march to Rome. As a result the death which he said had passed him over came to several hundreds of his legionaries, who valiantly gave up their lives in a useless and unnecessary warfare. That Fiume was saved to fulfill its future mission was due not to its dictator

but to the sanity of the Italian commanders and their troops.

Fiume accepted without regret D'Annunzio's departure. The Fiuman Council, which succeeded him in command of the city, had little difficulty in coming to terms with the Italians. It willingly promised an honest cooperation in the treaty of Rapallo. The hopes of Fiume are in the development of an outlet for the raw materials of a prosperous Jugo-Slavia and central Europe and a port of entry for the manufactured products of the world. For the city to fulfill this destiny, the Council knows, it requires a sane and able business administration. This an egotistic visionary could not furnish, and Fiume may well rejoice that with the end of the Fiuman question there came also the end of the D'Annunzio régime.

The World may find reason for congratulation that the long drawn out Adriatic controversy, so often fraught with perilous situations, should at last find a solution which appears so amicably accepted and so free from future difficulties.

The Army Wives.

Brigadier-General CLARENCE R. EDWARDS recently paid a high tribute to the army women, the wives and daughters of the soldiers, in a short address he made at Boston to a number of former hostesses at cantonments. He entered the army when many of the pioneer forts west of the Missouri were still occupied as army posts and when the memory of Indian outbreaks and the Custer massacre was still fresh. He said in the light of his own experience:

"These wives and daughters of soldiers have patrolled their husbands and fathers on the back and sent them to war without a murmur. They have followed the flag from one place to another, patched and schemed, frozen on one side and roasted on the other beside garriole stoves, put up with all sorts of hardships and never found fault."

The pictures of army post social life which we have sometimes had even from army writers and novelists are of discontented, unhappy women arrayed in rival cliques, intriguing and scheming for promotions which would bring to husbands or sons an advance in pay and a gain in privileges. This may have been the case at some posts and in some commands, but such things were exceptional. The isolation of the army post threw the garriole largely upon its own resources for entertainment. Life too was more or less of an open book. There was small chance for pretension with every one knowing every one else's income, and keeping up appearances was not as important with women as with men.

There were always too some very gracious peace-makers in post life, in the women of families such as the Hunts, Caseys, Lees and Davises, who have had representatives in the army since Revolutionary days and knew all of its trials and hardships. Their tact was put to the test in many ways. They adroitly drew the line between gossip that was purely personal and that which might affect the garriole. They consoled the young Second Lieutenant's bride from civil life who had no more than settled her wedding gifts in Texas quarters than orders came for transfer to Dakota; they did their best to show the new army woman how to make the small pay stretch to meet the family demands and how to make a home in cheerless quarters where there had not been installed an improvement or labor saving device since the day the old brick barracks were finished.

There was never any doubt of the loyalty and courage of the army women. Army women have left vivid pictures of garriole experience before and after General CUSTER'S expedition. They always stood the test. General SHERMAN once said "It was the women left at home that made the men good soldiers in the field."

It is for the improvement of the living conditions of women at the army posts that Brigadier-General EDWARDS speaks. The hope he sees for this improvement lies in the fact that women now have a voice in public affairs and they will use it to bring about reforms long needed.

The free verse poets must think it strange that every new year the people who want poetry turn to an old fashioned fellow like TENNYSON.

The State Department is informed that great excitement was caused in Petrograd a week or two ago as a result of persistent reports that money was to be abolished throughout Bolshevik territory. Many residents attempted to dispose of their currency in various ways, buying furs, household goods, jewelry and other articles in such quantities as to increase prices to a remarkable extent. In other words, the ruble fell. The only surprising thing about the incident is that anybody should give up good property for Bolshevik money.

The New Guest.

(1921).

Last night, an midnight sound from the door.

To see the parting guest, we were at least:

Now, at the nearing of the sunrise hour, Our gaze is toward the East:

Toward the horizon whence the light shall bring

One upon whom our fondest faith is set:

Fair flowers of hope shall be our offering

To him for coronet.

Our prayers go forth to him that every land

May know from strife the gaudion of release:

May he hear to us in his open hand

The golden gift of Peace!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

## Government Waste.

Thirty-four Health Organizations Doing Their Work Independently.

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: While our statesmen are studying national economy I respectfully ask their attention to an editorial article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for December 25.

By an unofficial survey it is shown that there are "thirty-four independent Government organizations carrying on some kind of work directly relating to public health. These organizations, instead of being closely correlated, are scattered throughout the different departments."

The Public Health Service and the War Risk Insurance are under the Secretary of the Treasury, while the Children's Bureau is in the Department of Labor. School Hygiene and Physical Education, the Indian Medical Service and the Government Hospital for the Insane are managed under the Interior Department.

The Department of Agriculture has the Bureau of Chemistry, Animal Industry, Entomology and Biology. The Division of Vital Statistics is in the Department of Commerce. Independent commissions and boards, as the Interdepartmental Hygiene, Vocational Training, Bureau of Safety and the Medical Service of the Government Printing Office, are unrelated to any other of the health agencies.

There are fortunately among all these two thoroughly efficient departments of which our country may well be proud, namely, the medical departments of the United States Army and of the Navy, related respectively to the War and Navy Departments.

It would be interesting to have made public the unnecessary cost of these many uncorrelated services. It would be interesting to know why all these services cannot be taken over by the thoroughly organized and highly efficient medical departments of the army and navy.

Millions of dollars would be saved the taxpayers by the simple economy of consolidation.

MURICUS.

NEW YORK, December 31.

A Man Afoot Protests.

He Objects to Blaming Pedestrians When Motor Cars Hit Them.

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: There is truly remarkable unanimity among the gentlemen who break into the subject of automobile accidents in blaming pedestrians for those mishaps to the tune of 90 per cent.

Do these gentlemen carry about them some comptometer which keeps count besides differentiating between accidents so nicely?

The fact of the matter is the law governing the right of way at street crossings is no longer enforced, for the law distinctly says that the pedestrian has the right of way over all vehicles while he is on the cross walk.

It is also a fact that our busy streets are being used as speedways, which they were never intended for.

Considering the importance which is attached to automobilists by our public officials it is safe to say that these gentlemen will never be curbed unless the majority of the population, which has been inarticulate on this serious subject up to date, acts as one man and enforces the basic law.

FRED DEKHEIMER.

BROOKLYN, December 31.

Flogging for Criminals.

Repentance Inspired by the Whipping Post in Delaware.

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: "New Jersey Acts to Keep Out Crime Wave" is a headline printed in your paper. We do not hear of a crime wave in Delaware, but Delaware has a whipping post for such things, and the man who has been tied up to it becomes at once repentant and regenerate—at least as to Delaware!

Why should we allow a stupid sentimentality to protect the person of the gunman, the gangster and the thief? What personal respect is due him? How much respect does he show his victim? Has society no right to such a simple and efficient means of self-protection and no duty to employ it?

The whipping post would cause such a rush across our borders as would give our neighbors a right complaint and an incentive to do likewise.

BEACON, December 31.

J. S. P.

Homicides in 1920.

Preliminary Figures Indicate a Falling Off in the Murder Rate.

From the Statistical Bulletin, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

In spite of the so-called "crime wave" which the nation's cities have assumed so prominent a place in the public press during recent weeks the year 1920 will probably be the most favorable one on record for homicide among insured wage earners. In the industrial department of this company the death rate for this cause for the period January 1 to December 31, 1920, reached the comparatively low level of 5.5 per 100,000. This is a decline of over 20 per cent. from the rate of 1919, which was 6.9. These insurance figures nearly always reflect conditions in the total population of the United States and Canada, and we may therefore expect that one of the features in the good general mortality record of 1920 will be a low homicide rate.

Only one month, namely, September, of this year shows a mortality record from this cause of death—8.4 per 100,000—which was equal to or exceeded for the year 1919—6.9 per 100,000. Since September the rate has progressively declined. The present "crime wave," with murder as its chief element, has apparently been confined to a few localities and to a very short period. It is not likely to affect seriously the homicide figures for the whole country and for the whole year.

These Troublesome Times.

Kelker—What is the matter with the bird?

Booker—Unrest, arrest and rest.

The Dregs of Bombay.

Bombay correspondence London Daily Mail.

Mahomedans in Bombay have started an anti-drinking campaign to "reform" their coreligionists. They are picketing the liquor shops, and the Moslems found coming out to the streets and are marching through the streets.

One man found drunk was decked with a "garland" of old shoes and was taken round the city by an escort beating empty oil tins.

## Manon Lescaut and Parsifal Are Sung Daily Calendar

Mme. Alda and Mr. De Luca Heard in Puccini Opera—Mr. Sembach Replaces Mr. Harold in Wagner's Work.

Last evening at the Metropolitan Opera House Puccini's "Manon Lescaut" was given. This admirable work regarded by many as Puccini's most artistic creation, has never supplanted Massenet's "Manon" in public favor. It has, however, grown in the general esteem in recent years and every repetition serves to deepen the conviction that it will live quite as long as "La Bohème" and "Madama Butterfly."

The performance had sound merits, though it attained no high level of distinction. There was much laxity and even occasional slovenliness in the ensemble. The orchestra was deficient in smoothness and the chorus work was often ragged. "Manon Lescaut" is a delicately fashioned score and demands finish in the performance.

The principal roles were played by Mme. Alda as Manon, Mr. Martinelli as the Chevalier des Grieux, Mr. De Luca as Lescaut and Mr. Malatesta as Geronte. The soprano's voice was somewhat unsteady and her singing suffered from it. Mr. Martinelli was in good condition and treated the audience to an abundance of those brilliant high tones which give so much joy. Mr. De Luca was competent and sang well. Mr. Malatesta was feeble.

According to the time honored custom of giving "Parsifal" at the New Year's festival, it was performed yesterday afternoon. In this hearing of the music drama there were three important changes in the cast. Mr. Sembach, replacing Mr. Harold, sang the title role for the first time here in several seasons. His voice was a man better order than on last Wednesday when, suffering with a cold, he was heard in *Tristan*. Much of his English was understandable and much was not, but otherwise his impersonation was artistic.

Owing to the sudden indisposition of Mr. Whitehill, Robert Leoniard took his place as Amfortas. It was the first time he had sung the music on any stage, and his musicianship was generally shown by the manner in which he sustained the difficult part. Mr. Rothler, heard in the role of Gurnemanz last season, sang in place of Mr. Blasi. Mme. Matzenauer was the Kundry. Mr. Bodanzky conducted. The performance,